

Accreditation Standards for Initial Teacher Education Programmes in Western Australia

Introduction

One of the functions of the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia (TRBWA) is to determine applications from WA universities and other higher education institutions for the accreditation of their initial teacher education programmes (see section 89 of the *Teacher Registration Act 2012*). In doing so, the TRBWA is to work with the other teacher registration authorities in Australia and New Zealand to establish a national accreditation scheme.

Regulation 9 of the *Teacher Registration (Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programmes) Regulations 2012* requires the TRBWA to develop Standards detailing the structure, content, duration, admission and graduation criteria, and outcomes of programmes that are suitable for accreditation. Once developed, the 'Accreditation Standards' are subject to the approval of the Minister for Education.

The TRBWA resolved to adopt the "Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards" (the Australian Standards¹) for use in Western Australia and, in December 2012, the Minister for Education approved the Accreditation Standards set out in this document.

There are 7 Standards:

- Standard 1: Program outcomes
- Standard 2: Program development
- Standard 3: Program entrants
- Standard 4: Program structure and content
- Standard 5: School partnerships
- Standard 6: Program delivery and resourcing
- Standard 7: Program information and evaluation

Standard 1: Program outcomes

1.1. At the time of **initial accreditation**, providers must show that graduates of their programs will meet the Graduate career stage of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* and how this will be demonstrated.

1.2. At the time of re-accreditation, providers must demonstrate that graduates of their programs meet the Graduate career stage of the National Professional Standards for Teachers.

1.3. Programs meet the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) so that, on satisfactory completion, the graduate has a four-year or longer full-time equivalent higher education qualification structured as:

- a three-year undergraduate degree providing the required discipline knowledge, plus a two-year graduate entry professional qualification, or
- an integrated qualification of at least four years comprising discipline studies and professional studies, or

1 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), May 2011 reprint, www.aitsl.edu.au. The 'Australian Standards' were approved by Australian Ministers for Education on 15 April 2011.

- combined degrees of at least four years covering discipline and professional studies, or
- other combinations of qualifications identified by the provider and approved by the teacher regulatory authority ('the Authority') in consultation with AITSL to be equivalent to the above, and that enable alternative or flexible pathways into the teaching profession².

Standard 2: Program development

2.1. Programs take account of:

- contemporary school and system needs
- current professional expert knowledge
- authoritative educational research findings, and
- community expectations.

This occurs through consultation with employing authorities, professional teacher bodies and/or the direct involvement of practising teachers, educational researchers and relevant cultural and community experts (e.g. local Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander groups, parents' organisations).

2.2. Programs at self-accrediting higher education institutions have been assessed as meeting internal accreditation processes such that there is coherence and rigour in the intended program outcomes, approaches to teaching and learning, and related student assessment.

2.3. Programs of non self-accrediting institutions meet both the relevant accreditation requirements for such institutions and the requirements for national accreditation of initial teacher education programs.

Wherever practicable, the two accreditation processes will be undertaken concurrently, ensuring there is coherence and rigour in the intended program outcomes, approaches to teaching and learning and related student assessment, as well as economy of effort.

Standard 3: Program entrants

3.1 All entrants to initial teacher education will successfully demonstrate their capacity to engage effectively with a rigorous higher education program and to carry out the intellectual demands of teaching itself. To achieve this, it is expected that applicants' levels of personal literacy and numeracy should be broadly equivalent to those of the top 30 per cent of the population.

3.2 Providers who select students who do not meet the requirements in 3.1 above must establish satisfactory additional arrangements to ensure that all students are supported to achieve the required standard before graduation.

3.3 Graduate entry initial teacher education programs have clear selection criteria and equitable entry procedures that require students to have achieved a discipline-specific qualification, relevant to the Australian curriculum or other recognised areas of schooling provision.

For secondary teaching this is at least a *major study*³ in one teaching area and preferably a second teaching area comprising at least a *minor study*⁴.

2 The Authority will make an initial determination about the eligibility of a program for accreditation, based on Program Standard 1.3. Where a program is "(an)other combination of qualifications" as provided for in the standard, the Authority will report its determination to AITSL, who will confer with all of the teacher regulatory authorities and either endorse or recommend reconsideration of the determination before a final decision is reached by the Authority.

For primary teaching this is at least one year of full-time equivalent study relevant to one or more learning areas of the primary school curriculum.

3.4 Students admitted to programs on the basis of an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) assessment, or an equivalent English language proficiency assessment, have attained an overall IELTS (or equivalent) score of 7.5 (with no score below 7 in any of the four skills areas, and a score of no less than 8 in speaking and listening), either on entry to or on graduation from the program.

3.5 Recognition of prior learning or credit transfer arrangements are determined by providers in accordance with the AQF *National Principles and Operational Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning and Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and Articulation from Vocational Education and Training to Higher Education*.

Standard 4: Program structure and content

4.1 Program structures must be sequenced coherently to reflect effective connections between theory and practice.

4.2 Professional studies in education include discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies, general education studies and professional experience. The professional studies in education will comprise at least two years of full-time equivalent study⁵.

4.3 Discipline studies will normally be completed either in a separate discipline degree completed prior to a graduate entry initial teacher education program, or as part of an integrated undergraduate teaching degree or combined teaching/discipline degree program.

4.4 Primary programs

Teacher education programs that prepare primary teachers must include study in each of the learning areas of the primary school curriculum sufficient to equip teachers to teach across the years of primary schooling.

In undergraduate primary programs, at least one half of the program (i.e. normally two years of full-time equivalent study) must be dedicated to the study of the discipline of each primary learning area and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies. This must include at least one-quarter of a year of full-time equivalent study of discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies in each of English/literacy, mathematics/numeracy, and at least one-eighth of a year of full-time equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies in science.

The remainder of the program may be structured to include extension or specialist studies in priority areas or related curriculum areas.

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- 3 Study undertaken for a major study will be equivalent to a total of three-quarters of a year of successful full-time higher education study, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over three years. In most programs, this equates to six units, with no more than two at first-year level and no fewer than two units at third-year level.
 - 4 Study undertaken for a minor study will be equivalent to a total of half a year of successful full-time higher education study, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over two years. In most programs, this equates to four units, with no more than two at first-year level.
 - 5 These standards refer to the amount of study to be undertaken in particular areas in terms of years of full-time equivalent study. This is compatible with the measurement of student load in terms of equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL). In a traditional structure of eight units per year, one unit would be equivalent to one-eighth of a year of full-time equivalent study.

Graduate entry primary programs may comprise one year of full-time equivalent professional studies in education.

These programs must include at least one half year of full-time equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies across the learning areas of the primary school curriculum. Programs must include at least one-eighth of a year of full-time equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies in each of English/literacy and mathematics/ numeracy, and at least one-sixteenth of a year of full-time equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies in science.

These programs may include up to one-eighth of a year of full-time equivalent study of relevant discipline studies as elective units which could be undertaken by applicants who do not fully meet prerequisite discipline study requirements.

4.5 Secondary programs

Undergraduate secondary programs must provide a sound depth and breadth of knowledge appropriate for the teaching area/s the graduate intends to teach.

These programs should provide at least a *major study*⁶ in one teaching area and preferably a second teaching area comprising at least a *minor study*⁷.

In addition, these programs must include a minimum of one-quarter of a year of full-time equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies for each teaching area the graduate intends to teach. Discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies will prepare graduates to teach across the years of secondary schooling.

Graduate entry secondary programs may comprise one year of full-time equivalent professional studies in education.

Programs must include a minimum of one-eighth of a year of full-time equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies for each teaching area that the graduate intends to teach. The discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies should prepare graduates to teach across the years of secondary schooling.

These programs may include up to one-eighth of a year of full-time equivalent study of relevant discipline studies as elective units which could be undertaken by applicants who do not fully meet prerequisite discipline study requirements.

4.6 Specialist programs

Where initial teacher education programs include specialist area studies (e.g. primary physical education, secondary special education, secondary teacher librarianship, etc.), these studies must comprise one year of full-time equivalent study relevant to that specialist area.

4.7 Non-traditional and other settings

Some teacher education programs prepare graduates for teaching across traditional boundaries.

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- 6 Study undertaken for a major study will be equivalent to a total of three-quarters of a year of successful full-time higher education study, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over three years. In most programs, this equates to six units, with no more than two at first-year level and no fewer than two units at third-year level.
 - 7 Study undertaken for a minor study will be equivalent to a total of half a year of successful full-time higher education study, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over two years. In most programs, this equates to four units, with no more than two at first-year level.

Programs that prepare graduates to teach in both early childhood settings and primary schools are expected to prepare graduates for teaching the curriculum in both contexts.

Programs that prepare graduates for middle school teaching may have a stronger emphasis on teaching particular year levels (e.g. Years 5 to 9) but must fully address the requirements for primary teaching and for secondary teaching in at least one *major study* or two *minor studies* in secondary teaching areas.

Programs that prepare graduates for teaching across P/F/R/K-Year 12 must address the requirements for both primary and secondary teaching.

Programs that prepare graduates for teaching in other specialised teaching roles in schools and other educational settings must address the specific content and pedagogy of the specialisation⁸.

Standard 5: School partnerships

- 5.1 Providers have established enduring school partnerships to deliver their programs, particularly the professional experience component.
- 5.2 The professional experience component of each program must include no fewer than 80 days of well-structured, supervised and assessed teaching practice in schools in undergraduate and double-degree teacher education programs and no fewer than 60 days in graduate entry programs.
- 5.3 Providers describe in detail the elements of the relationship between the provider and the schools, the nature and length of professional experience placements, the components of the placement including the planned experiences and related assessment criteria and methods, and the supervisory and professional support arrangements.
- 5.4 Providers and their school partners ensure the professional experience component of their program provides their program's students with professional experience that enables:
 - working with learners in a variety of school year levels
 - appreciation of the diversity of students and communities which schools serve (e.g. rural and metropolitan settings, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Indigenous communities, etc.).
- 5.5 Providers and their school partners ensure that teachers supervising professional experience (in particular the supervised teaching practice) are suitably qualified and registered. They should have expertise and be supported in coaching and mentoring, and in making judgements about whether students have achieved the Graduate Teacher Standards.
- 5.6 Providers require that the supervised teaching practice:
 - mandates at least a satisfactory formal assessment of the program's students against the professional practice elements of the Graduate Teacher Standards as a requirement for graduating from the program
 - is undertaken mostly in a recognised Australian school setting over a substantial and sustained period that is relevant to an authentic classroom environment, and
 - includes a designated role for supervising teachers in the assessment of the program's students.

8 Specific requirements will be developed for programs preparing teachers for settings other than traditional schools where required.

5.7 School partnership arrangements provide for the timely identification of program students at risk of not satisfactorily completing the formal teaching practice, and of ensuring appropriate support for improvement or program counselling.

Standard 6: Program delivery and resourcing

6.1 Programs must use effective teaching and assessment strategies (linked to intended learning outcomes) and resources, including embedded information and communication technologies.

6.2 Programs are delivered by appropriately qualified staff, consistent with the staffing requirements in the relevant *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes*, including an appropriate proportion who also have contemporary school teaching experience.

6.3 Providers ensure that programs use contemporary facilities and resources, including information and communication technologies, which students can expect to be available in schools.

6.4 Providers ensure that their facilities conform to the general expectation for a contemporary higher education learning environment appropriate to the mode of delivery, including such matters as access to:

- education-related library resources
- information and communication technologies.

Standard 7: Program information and evaluation

7.1 Providers use a range of data, such as student assessment information, destination surveys, employer and other stakeholder feedback to drive program improvement and periodic formal evaluation.

7.2 Providers report annually to the Authority outlining challenges encountered or any changes in programs.

7.3 Providers supply data as required to support local and national teacher workforce supply reporting, to support program and provider benchmarking, and to build a cumulative database of evidence relating to the quality of teacher education in Australia. Data collected is held in a centrally managed database and, under agreed protocols, will be available to all jurisdictions and teacher education providers for research, evaluation and program improvement.